

CHAPTER IV.

THE INDIAN CAMPAIGN.

On Engineering Duty at Baltimore.—Made Superintendent of West Point.—Promoted Lieutenant-colonel of Second Cavalry.—Regiment Ordered to Texas.—Character of Indian Warfare.—Campaigning against the Comanches.—The Cortinas Raid.—Return to Arlington.

AFTER the conclusion of the treaty negotiations with Mexico, Colonel Lee returned home with the army, and was again assigned to duty in the corps of military Engineers, and stationed at Soller's Point, near Baltimore, where he was placed in charge of the defensive works there constructing. His successive assignment to duty in connection with the erection of fortifications at such important points as Hampton Roads, New York harbor, and Baltimore gives evidence that he was highly esteemed as a military engineer, and the character of the works upon which he was thus engaged still attests his ability in this direction. In fact, to his thorough training in engineering science was added a quick and correct perception which enabled him to quickly grasp the military requisites of a situation and to make the best possible provision for its defence.

An incident occurred during this period of his life which it will be of interest to transcribe, both as showing the high estimation in which he was then held as a soldier and his exalted sense of the duty he owed to his country. It was related by Jefferson Davis in his address at the Lee Memorial meeting in Richmond, November 3, 1870:

"He came from Mexico crowned with honors, covered by brevets, and recognized, young as he was, as one of the ablest of his country's soldiers. And to prove that he was estimated then as such, not only by his associates, but by foreigners also, I may mention that when he was a captain of Engineers, sta-

tioned in Baltimore, the Cuban Junta in New York selected him to be their leader in the revolutionary effort in that island. They were anxious to secure his services, and offered him every temptation that ambition could desire, and pecuniary emoluments far beyond any which he could hope otherwise to acquire. He thought the matter over, and, I remember, came to Washington to consult me as to what he should do. After a brief discussion of the complex character of the military problem which was presented, he turned from the consideration of that view of the question by stating that the point on which he wished particularly to consult me was as to the propriety of entertaining the proposition which had been made to him. He had been educated in the service of the United States, and felt it wrong to accept service in the army of a foreign power while he held his commission. Such was his extreme delicacy, such the nice sense of honor of the gallant gentleman we deplore. But when Virginia, the State to which he owed his first and last allegiance, withdrew from the Union, and thus terminated his relations to it, the same nice sense of honor and duty which had guided him on a former occasion had a different application and led him to share her fortune for good or for evil."

For three years, from 1849 to 1852, Colonel Lee was engaged in the construction of the fortifications at Baltimore. His service there ended on September 1, 1852, on which date he was appointed superintendent of the Military Academy of West Point, to succeed Captain Brewerton. In this position he remained till April 1, 1855, when he was promoted to a command in the cavalry arm of the service. This, under the law, incapacitated him for further duty as superintendent of West Point, and he was succeeded in that office by Major J. G. Barnard.

His administration had been a highly efficient and successful one. He improved the discipline of the Academy and brought it up as a military institution to a higher proficiency than it had ever previously attained. During his administration the course of study was extended, under order of the Secretary of War, dated August 28, 1854, to five years, and several improvements were made to the Academy and its surroundings. These

consisted of a new wharf and road, a spacious and excellent riding-hall, etc.

We may at this point fitly quote from a private letter written by Colonel Lee on August 6, 1853, to a young friend of his who was about to engage in business, as serving to show the personal interest which he then and always took in whatever concerned the welfare of his friends and acquaintances. He appears to have been—and was, in fact—the confidant and adviser of a great number of the young men belonging to the best class of Virginia families. To him they were constantly writing for information, assistance, encouragement, and advice, and upon his opinion they based their own actions:

"I am glad to find that you have also a prospect of employment with Mr. Manning. Choose between them that which best affords a prospect of advancement and improvement. You are perhaps aware that a young man entering on railroad service, and bringing no experience, is expected to take a subordinate position, no matter what his qualifications, at the bottom of the ladder, and to prove by his work his capabilities for advancement. Bear this constantly in mind, my dear Conny, and work your own promotion. Recollect what depends on your exertions, and how much you owe your mother's love, sister's affection, the expectations of family and friends. You must excuse my anxiety on your behalf, my interest in your welfare, and my ardent desire to see you do justice to yourself and credit to your name."

The great acquisition of territory that followed the Mexican War and the frequent Indian outbreaks in the frontier States and Territories rendered an increase of the army necessary for the protection of the greatly-extended border-line and of the new population that was crowding into the fertile region of the West. Therefore, Congress in 1855 passed an act authorizing the raising of two new regiments of infantry and two of cavalry. The principal grades in these regiments were filled by selections from those officers who had most highly distinguished themselves in the war with Mexico.

Of the two new cavalry regiments, the First was placed under the command of Colonel E. V. Sumner, with Brevet

Colonel J. E. Johnston as lieutenant-colonel, while the same grade in the Second Cavalry, which was commanded by Colonel A. S. Johnston, was assigned to Brevet Colonel R. E. Lee. As soon as these regiments were organized and equipped, the First Cavalry was assigned to Kansas, while the Second was sent to Western Texas for the defence of the settlers and domesticated Indians against the incursions of the nomadic tribes which infested those regions, and which embraced as their most formidable members the Comanches, the Apaches, and their kindred tribes.

During the fall and winter of 1855-56 the Second Cavalry was recruited and organized at Jefferson Barracks. Colonel Lee in this work brought to bear with great effect his fine power of organization and discipline. The winter at Jefferson Barracks was so severe that little could be done in the way of drilling and setting up the regiment, but when spring opened that branch of regimental work was pushed forward with great activity, and the regiment rapidly acquired proficiency in drill and the rules of discipline. Colonel Lee contributed much to this desirable end by his influence and example. When the spring had sufficiently advanced to ensure firm roads over the alluvial soil of Missouri and Arkansas the Second Cavalry began its long march to Western Texas. Colonel A. S. Johnston and Colonel Hardee were the only field officers present, Colonel Lee and Major Thomas having obtained leave of absence to transact personal business. The route taken led the regiment past Forts Smith and Wachita. The latter fort was at that time garrisoned by two batteries of artillery; Major H. J. Hunt commanded the post. When the regiment approached the fort it was received with a salute of thirteen guns, which Colonel Johnston at the head of his regiment most gracefully acknowledged. Johnston was in the prime of life, tall and graceful, with a superb military bearing. The regiment encamped in the vicinity of the fort. After completing their arrangements all officers partook of a collation that had been provided for them by the officers of Fort Wachita—an entertainment which was greatly enjoyed by both guests and hosts.

"Johnston gave his regiment a day's rest ere he pro-

ceeded on his march. The officers of the regiment frequently spoke of Colonel Lee in the highest terms of praise, and seemed to look forward with pleasure to the time when he should join them. The writer, who was at that time stationed at Fort Wachita, was in a position to understand the character of the service that awaited the new cavalry regiment, and this it may be of interest to describe.

The theatre on which this gallant regiment was to operate was the region embraced by the Rio Grande on the south and the Arkansas River on the north, and extending from the western boundary of the Indian Territory to the eastern confines of New Mexico. This extensive territory was occupied exclusively by wild animals and Comanche Indians.

The Comanches were the hereditary lords of this immense domain, and for generations it had been their custom to levy contributions on their neighbors with an unsparing hand. They were also in the habit of making frequent raids into the northern Mexican states, and sometimes extended their excursions to the confines of Louisiana and Arkansas, murdering and pillaging the defenceless inhabitants, and then returning to their strongholds with immense booty. They were often pursued, but, being well mounted on strong, active ponies, almost invariably eluded their pursuers. Since the admission of Texas into the Union and the acquisition of New Mexico and other Mexican territory, the United States had made constant efforts to suppress Indian depredations on our Western frontiers and in the newly-acquired territories.

The system of defence adopted was the establishment of a chain of military posts on the Western frontier and in the Indian country. The military establishment of the United States being on a very meagre scale, these posts were insufficiently garrisoned to afford entire protection. At the time the Second Cavalry was ordered to Texas the Comanches had been unusually active in their predatory excursions. It was therefore expected that the regiment would have to perform much arduous service. A finer body of troops than the Second Cavalry was never seen.

The colonel was a perfect soldier, and his subalterns were

unsurpassed for ability and conduct. As a proof of the superiority of these officers it may be said that this regiment turned out during the war more distinguished men than any other regiment in the army. Besides Johnston, Lee, Hardee, and Thomas, it furnished Van Dorn, Palmer, Hood, Fitz Lee, Stoneman, Kirby Smith, Fields, and others not remembered, all of whom became general officers in either the Confederate or the Federal service.

As soon as the regiment reached its destination it was split up into detachments which were sent on expeditions in different directions. In order to illustrate the character of the service which it was required to perform, the writer may give an example that came within his personal knowledge. In the spring of 1854 a party of emigrants was pursuing its way through the western part of Texas. It was accompanied by a newly-married couple, a Mr. and Mrs. Wilson. They were both young, and had determined to cast their lot in Western Texas. The party was discovered just before it reached its destination by a band of Comanches, who attacked and murdered all with the exception of Mrs. Wilson, whose youth and beauty excited the admiration of the Comanche chief. The news of this massacre was reported at a military post by a mail-party the day after it happened. A mounted company was at once sent in pursuit of the marauders, accompanied by an experienced guide. On reaching the place of the massacre it appeared from signs that the Comanche band was large and had proceeded with its booty in a north-western direction toward the confines of New Mexico. A rapid pursuit was immediately instituted, and after many long and wearisome marches succeeded in overtaking the hostiles among the Pecos Hills, not far from Santa Fé. They were immediately attacked and defeated. Mrs. Wilson was found with them, and rescued and sent to Santa Fé, where she was kindly received and finally returned to her friends.

The Second Cavalry was employed in the arduous and dangerous duty thus assigned to it until the outbreak of the Civil War, and performed much useful service in repressing the activity of its savage foes and in punishing them for their outrages.

The "memorandum-book" kept by Colonel Lee during this period furnishes interesting information concerning his own movements and those of the regiment, and from these notes and his letters we can gain a fair idea of his life during the Indian campaign.

From these memoranda we learn that he left Alexandria on February 12, 1856, to join his regiment, and reached it at Fort Mason, Texas, on March 25th. He was then directed by Colonel Johnston to proceed to Camp Cooper—situated in the Comanche Reserve on the Clear Fork of the Brazos, thirty-five miles from its mouth—and take command of the first and fifth squadrons of the regiment, there stationed. He reached this post on April 9th, and writes under date of the 12th to the following effect:

"We are on the Comanche Reserve, with the Indian camps below us on the river belonging to Catumseh's band, whom the Government is endeavoring to humanize. It will be uphill work, I fear. Catumseh has been to see me, and we have had a talk, very tedious on his part and very sententious on mine. I hailed him as a friend as long as his conduct and that of his tribe deserved it, but would meet him as an enemy the first moment he failed to keep his word. The rest of the tribe (about a thousand, it is said) live north of us, and are hostile. Yesterday I returned his visit, and remained a short time at his lodge. He informed me that he had six wives. They are riding in and out of camp all day, their paint and 'ornaments' rendering them more hideous than nature made them, and the whole race is extremely uninteresting."

Shortly afterward Colonel Lee with five companies made an expedition to the head-waters of the Brazos and Wachita rivers, which occupied him several months. The principal result of this expedition was the acquisition of geographical information, for at that time the Comanches were on their annual pilgrimage to the north of the Arkansas River in search of game for their winter supply of provisions.

Of his subsequent life in Texas interesting glimpses are obtained from his letters. The Comanches seem to have made plentiful work for the soldiers. Thus on August 25, 1856, he

speaks of a party of these restless savages who had been on a maurauding expedition into Mexico, "which is a cloak to cover all their thefts and murders." They were then seeking to steal north around the cavalry camp, divided into small parties to escape detection. He was about to send out a company of troopers in pursuit, with directions to follow them for twenty days if necessary. He says : "These people give a world of trouble to man and horse, and, poor creatures! they are not worth it."

Again, in January, 1857, he reports several encounters between the troops and maurauding Indians, who were severely punished. "It is a distressing state of things that requires the application of such treatment, but it is the only corrective they understand, the only way in which they can be brought to keep within their own limits."

During this period, however, he himself was absent from his command, having been summoned to Fort Brown, on the Rio Grande, to serve on a court-martial. Here his chief enjoyment seems to have been in the natural surroundings. He writes: "My daily walks are alone, up and down the banks of the river, and my pleasure is derived from my own thoughts and from the sight of the flowers and animals I there meet with. The birds of the Rio Grande form a constant source of interest, and are as numerous as they are beautiful in plumage. I wish I could get for you the roots of some of the luxuriant vines that cover everything, or the seeds of the innumerable flowers."

He returned to Camp Cooper on April 18, 1857. On July 23d orders came for Colonel Johnston to report in person at Washington and to turn over to his lieutenant-colonel the command of the regiment. On October 21st Lee received notice by telegraph of the death of G. W. P. Custis, his wife's father, and returned to Arlington, reaching there on November 11th.

An officer who served under him during this period writes of him as follows, bearing the same testimony as all of his friends: "He examined everything thoroughly and conscientiously until master of every detail, ever too conscientious to act under imperfect knowledge of any subject submitted to him. And with all his stern sense of duty he attracted the

love, admiration, and confidence of all. The little children always hailed his approach with glee, his sincerity, kindness of nature, and cordial manners attracting their unreserved confidence."

Returning to Texas after his visit home, he resumed command of the regiment. As to the character of his life there we have already said enough. There were no serious encounters with the Indians, but a multitude of petty affrays, sufficient to break the monotony of camp-life, yet not of such importance as to claim special attention. He was in Washington again in the autumn of 1859, and on this occasion played a part in the famous "John Brown raid," which we shall describe in the next chapter.

After this affair he returned to duty with his regiment, under orders from headquarters of February 9, 1860, which assigned him to the command of the department of Texas. Reaching there on February 20th, he found work prepared for him in the pursuit of one Cortinas, a notorious brigand who had been crossing the Rio Grande and committing depredations on Texan soil. Efforts were made to overtake and arrest this land-pirate, but without success. The vicinity of Mexican territory and the supineness of the Mexican authorities gave him every opportunity to cross and recross the river at will, now making a raid into Texas, now seeking a covert in Mexico, after the established and time-honored custom of the brigands of the Rio Grande.

Colonel Lee's journal contains the following notes in reference to this troublesome individual:

"March 16th. Continued my route, report having reached me that Cortinas was ascending the Rio Grande.

"March 20th. Could get no account of Cortinas's whereabouts, or learn that he had ever ascended the Rio Grande higher than La Mesa.

"April 10th. Resumed journey; nearly all the ranches on the road have been burned—those spared by Cortinas burned by the Rangers.

"April 11th. Resumed journey; reached the scene of Cortinas's defeat by Major Heintzelman.

" May 7th. Have been engaged corresponding with the Mexican authorities; succeeded in getting them to issue orders for the arrest of Cortinas. . . . He has left the frontier and withdrawn to the Ceritos with his property, horses, etc."

These few extracts will give some slight idea of the difficulties experienced by these frontier garrisons, which had to guard with a few troopers a long and thinly-inhabited frontier, and were prevented, for fear of international complications, from following brigands and savages across the river into Mexican territory, while the Mexicans themselves made little or no effort to suppress these outrages—perhaps winked at them.

Had Colonel Lee received the privilege of pursuing his foes upon Mexican soil, as some of his successors in the frontier department have done, the story of these marauders would probably have been a very different one. As he remarked in the letter quoted in our last chapter, he might have made "a rough diplomatist, but a tolerably quick one."

Events, however, were arising which were destined to abruptly end this active but unsatisfactory life on the frontier, and to bring him into a field of operations more worthy of his talents, and one destined to give him a worldwide fame. The detail of the causes and character of these events must be left to a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER V.

A DIVIDED COUNTRY.

Colonel's Lee's Views on Slavery.—The John Brown Raid.—Letters on Secession.—

Mr. Lincoln Inaugurated.—Fort Sumter Bombarded.—Virginia Secedes.—Lee, Blair, and Scott.—Lee Resigns his Commission.—Appointed Commander-in-chief of the Virginia Forces.

WE have in the preceding chapters covered the earlier events in the life of Robert E. Lee, and brought our work up to the date of the opening of one of the most stupendous events of modern times, the terrible Civil War between the Northern and Southern sections of the United States. It is now necessary to go back and briefly consider the preliminary events leading to this contest, and their effect upon Lee's beliefs and feelings, as expressed in letters from Texas dating back for several years before the era of secession.

The most exciting political question of that era was the irritating one of slavery, which had aroused the feelings of contestants on both sides of the much-debated problem to a degree of passion seldom before known in our Congressional chambers, and was dangerously heating the minds of the whole people, both South and North. This question, which a few years before was confined to a few political fanatics, had rapidly spread over the Northern and North-western States, and now nearly divided the political parties of those sections.

This rapid spread of abolitionism and of the spirit of dissension caused the conservatives of both the North and the South to feel serious alarm for the safety of the Union. Colonel Lee was of the latter class, being by education a firm supporter of constitutional liberty. In a letter from Texas dated December 27, 1856, he thus expresses himself:

" . . . I have just received the *Alexandria Gazette* from the 20th of November to the 18th of December, inclusive.

Besides the usual good reading matter, I am interested in the relation of local affairs, and infer from the quiet and ordinary course of events that all is going on well, especially (I hope) at Arlington.

"The steamer also brought the President's Message, the reports of the various heads of departments, etc., so that we are assured that the Government is in operation and the Union in existence. . . . I was much pleased with the President's Message. His views of the systematic and progressive efforts of certain people at the North to interfere with and change the domestic institutions of the South are truthfully and faithfully expressed. The consequences of their plans and purposes are also clearly set forth. These people must be aware that their object is both unlawful and foreign to them and to their duty, and that this institution, for which they are irresponsible and non-accountable, can only be changed by *them* through the agency of a civil and servile war.

"There are few, I believe, in this enlightened age who will not acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil. It is idle to expatiate on its disadvantages. I think it is a greater evil to the white than to the colored race. While my feelings are strongly enlisted in behalf of the latter, my sympathies are more deeply engaged for the former. The blacks are immeasurably better off here than in Africa, morally, physically, and socially. The painful discipline they are undergoing is necessary for their further instruction as a race, and will prepare them, I hope, for better things. How long their servitude may be necessary is known and ordered by a merciful Providence. Their emancipation will sooner result from the mild and melting influences of Christianity than from the storm and tempest of fiery controversy. This influence, though slow, is sure. The doctrines and miracles of our Saviour have required nearly two thousand years to convert but a small portion of the human race, and even among Christian nations what gross errors still exist! While we see the course of the final abolition of human slavery is still onward, and give it the aid of our prayers, let us leave the progress as well as the results in the hand of Him who sees the end, who chooses

to work by slow influences, and with whom a thousand years are but as a single day. Although the Abolitionist must know this—must know that he has neither the right nor the power of operating, except by moral means; that to benefit the slave he must not excite angry feelings in the master; that, although he may not approve the mode by which Providence accomplishes its purpose, the results will be the same; and that the reasons he gives for interference in matters he has no concern with holds good for every kind of interference with our neighbor,—still, I fear he will persevere in his evil course.

" . . . Is it not strange that the descendants of those Pilgrim Fathers who crossed the Atlantic to preserve their own freedom have always proved the most intolerant of the spiritual liberty of others?"

The political excitement in 1857 continued to be increased by the contest between the Pro-slavery and Free-soil parties for political supremacy in Kansas, until it was at such a height that argument was superseded by the pistol and the rifle. Several bloody encounters ensued. The district was so overrun by riot and bloodshed that it became necessary to sustain the civil authority by a large military force. The troops soon ended the disturbances, dispersed the political factions, and forced their leaders, through fear of punishment, to flee from the Territory.

This event, however, served to greatly intensify the prevailing political excitement. The Abolition party had already, in 1856, proved strong enough not only to nominate a candidate, John C. Fremont, for the Presidency, but to gain for him 114 electoral votes, being but 60 votes less than those cast for James Buchanan, the successful candidate. In the interval between this election and that of 1860 the strength of the Anti-slavery party rapidly augmented, and there was much reason to believe that it would be successful in its next effort. By the autumn of 1858 the country had become greatly aroused through the agitation incidental to the approaching Presidential campaign and the heated debates in Congress. During the succeeding year this political excitement was raised to a dangerous pitch by an event which then occurred, and which,

as Lee was directly connected with it, needs to be described more in detail.

The event referred to is what is known in the history of that period as the "John Brown raid." John Brown, a fanatical leader of the Free-soil party, who with his sons had played a prominent part in the Kansas difficulties, had since the suppression of that outbreak been secretly engaged in organizing a plan for the production of a servile insurrection in the South. In October, 1859, with the aid of a party of sixteen whites and five blacks, into whom he had infused his own enthusiasm and reckless disdain of consequences, he actually invaded Virginia, and seized the Government arsenal and other buildings at Harper's Ferry, with a desperate boldness that created the greatest consternation in the town and the surrounding country.

The moment that news of this invasion reached Washington the Government authorities took active measures to oppose it and capture the insurgents. General Scott was absent from Washington at the time, but Colonel Lee happened to be present, having shortly before arrived from Texas on a visit to his family at Arlington. He was immediately sent for by the Secretary of War, and asked to take command of a battalion of marines and proceed to Harper's Ferry, at which point a force of militia, hastily gathered from the adjoining counties, had previously assembled.

Colonel Lee, on arriving at Harper's Ferry, found that the insurgents had already failed in their main object, that of stirring up the slaves of the vicinity to join them as a nucleus for spreading the fire of insurrection throughout the negro population of the South. The occupation of the Government buildings under cover of night was the extent of their success, and they were here closely confined by the beleaguered militia. With a considerable degree of shrewdness, however, Brown had ordered the seizure of some of the principal citizens, whom he held as hostages in the engine-house in the armory yard, to which he had retired with his adherents.

Colonel Lee on arriving at once stationed his marines around this building, and sent Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart, who accompanied him, with a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the

insurgents, promising to protect them and secure them a legal trial. This demand Brown refused to comply with, and required on his part permission to march out with his men, arms, and prisoners as far as the second toll-gate. At this point he proposed to release his prisoners, and would then be ready to fight the troops if he could not escape.

It was out of the question to accept such a proposal. The envoy remonstrated with the insurgents, and tried to convince them of their folly. He only received for answer that if attacked they would kill their hostages. Among the latter was Colonel Lewis Washington, who resided in that neighborhood, and who at this moment boldly exclaimed, "Never mind *us*—fire!" Colonel Lee is reported to have remarked, on hearing these words, "The old Revolutionary blood does tell."

Before sending Lieutenant Stuart to hold this parley Colonel Lee had devised a scheme of action which was to be put into effect if the insurgents should refuse to surrender. In this event the lieutenant was directed to raise his arm as a signal, when the marines would rush upon the door of the engine-house, and so occupy the insurgents by the suddenness of their attack as to save the lives of the prisoners. The scheme was successfully executed. The marines rushed upon the door, forced it in, captured the building, and released the hostages uninjured. The result here described is briefly but clearly given in Lee's memorandum-book:

"Waited until daylight, as a number of citizens were held as hostages whose lives were threatened. Tuesday about sunrise, with twelve marines under Lieutenant Green, broke in the door of the engine-house, secured the insurgents, and released the prisoners unhurt. All the insurgents killed or mortally wounded but four—John Brown, Stevens, Coppie, and Shields."

The insurgents in their turn had fired upon their invaders with some effect. They would probably have been lynched by the excited citizens but for the presence of Colonel Lee and his marines. He handed them over to the civil authorities, as directed from Washington, and returned to Arlington.

We have, in the preceding chapter, briefly described the life of Colonel Lee during the last year of his residence in Texas.

Then in command of the department, he was, as we have seen, kept busily engaged in the pursuit of the brigand Cortinas and in other duties. In the midst of his arduous labors he from time to time cast anxious glances at the threatening aspect of the political horizon, and with a foreboding heart watched the cloud grow darker and more angry until the storm burst in the North and rolled South, whence it thundered back until the popular tempest rent the country in twain. The triumph of the party that had caused so much alarm throughout the South by the election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency in 1860 spread consternation among the conservatives of both sections, and especially among those of the South, since the radical hostility was directed principally at them. Nevertheless, there were many who hoped that the fears of the despondent were groundless, and that the country would be saved. But when Congress assembled in December it was soon discovered that the spirit of conciliation had departed from the deliberative body of the nation, and that there was no prospect of an amicable settlement of the political questions that had divided the country; and therefore the Southern representatives advised their constituents to prepare for a withdrawal from the Union—peaceably if possible, forcibly if necessary.

South Carolina, being the first to act, passed her ordinance of secession about the last of December, and the other Cotton States speedily followed her example.

From Texas in January, 1861, Colonel Lee expresses himself on the condition of the country as follows:

"I received Everett's *Life of General Washington*, which you sent me, and enjoyed its perusal. How his spirit would be grieved could he see the wreck of his mighty labors! I will not, however, permit myself to believe, until all the ground for hope has gone, that the fruit of his noble deeds will be destroyed and that his precious advice and virtuous example will so soon be forgotten by his countrymen. As far as I can judge from the papers, we are between a state of anarchy and civil war. May God avert both of these evils from us! I fear that mankind for years will not be sufficiently Christianized to bear the absence of restraint and force. I see that four States

have declared themselves out of the Union: four more will apparently follow their example. Then, if the Border States are brought into the gulf of revolution, one half of the country will be arrayed against the other. I must try and be patient and await the end, for I can do nothing to hasten or retard it."

From the above it may be observed with what pain and regret Colonel Lee witnessed the progressive steps leading toward the dissolution of the Union. In further illustration of this feeling, and of the political knowledge and wisdom of the writer, we may quote from another letter of the same date. It is addressed to his son from "Fort Mason, Texas, January 23, 1861," and contains the following highly interesting passage:

"The South, in my opinion, has been aggrieved by the acts of the North, as you say. I feel the aggression, and am willing to take every proper step for redress. It is the principle I contend for, not individual or private benefit. As an American citizen I take great pride in my country, her prosperity, and her institutions, and would defend any State if her rights were invaded. But I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than a dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. The framers of our Constitution never exhausted so much labor, wisdom, and forbearance in its formation, and surrounded it with so many guards and securities, if it was intended to be broken by every member of the Confederacy at will. It is intended for 'perpetual union,' so expressed in the preamble, and for the establishment of a government, not a compact, which can only be dissolved by revolution or the consent of all the people in convention assembled. It is idle to talk of secession. Anarchy would have been established, and not a government, by Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, and all the other patriots of the Revolution. . . . Still, a Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, and in which strife and civil war are to take the

place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country and for the welfare and progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved and the Government disrupted, I shall return to my native State and share the miseries of my people, and save in defence will draw my sword on none."

In February, 1861, the seven Cotton States united themselves into an independent republic under the designation of the Confederate States of America, and selected for its capital Montgomery, Alabama. The Border slaveholding States still adhered to the Union, hoping that after party passion should subside the final separation of the States would be prevented, and that the government under which they had attained a remarkable degree of wealth and prosperity would be preserved. At that time there was much speculation as to the policy Mr. Lincoln would adopt, and his inaugural address was awaited with impatience. At his inauguration on the 4th of March the address in which he declared his future policy was regarded as enigmatical, and various opinions were formed as to the probable course of the new President on the exciting questions which agitated the country. It was generally believed that his course would be conservative; at least it was thought that "honest old Abe," as Mr. Lincoln was familiarly called, would be governed by a desire for conciliation. It is probable that the intention of Mr. Lincoln was at first to adopt a national policy, as in his inaugural address, which seemed calm and dispassionate, he assured the country that he had no purpose to interfere with the institution of slavery *where it already existed*, and that, in his opinion, he had no right to do so. Yet he denounced the doctrine of the right of secession from the Union as unconstitutional, and declared his firm purpose to hold, occupy, and possess the places and property in the South belonging to the Federal Government. This announcement was received in the South as equivalent to a declaration of war.

Wishing to effect an amicable adjustment of the questions at issue, especially that of the surrender of Fort Sumter, the new Confederacy sent commissioners to Washington for that purpose. They were, however, not officially received by Mr. Lin-

coln, but were led to believe that his intentions toward the Confederacy were amicable, and that he would in due time order a peaceable surrender of Fort Sumter. With that belief the commissioners returned to Montgomery. Soon after the departure of the Confederate commissioners from Washington, Mr. Lincoln sent a formidable expedition to Charleston harbor for the relief of the fort. As soon as the attitude of Mr. Lincoln was discovered at Montgomery the Confederate authorities ordered the immediate reduction of Fort Sumter. Before attacking the place General Beauregard demanded its peaceable surrender, which being refused by its commander, Major Anderson, the fort was assailed by all the Confederate batteries which could be brought to bear upon it. After a bombardment of thirty-two hours Major Anderson was forced to capitulate on the 13th of April, 1861.

On the 15th of April, the second day after the fall of Fort Sumter, Mr. Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteers, and a few days later he issued proclamations ordering the blockade of the Southern ports and suspending the writ of habeas corpus. These acts were immediately resented by Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Missouri by the withdrawal of these States from the Union and their entrance into the Southern Confederacy, while Kentucky refused to comply with the call for troops and declared a neutrality. Maryland also refused to furnish troops, but from her geographical position was forced to submit. On the other hand, the non-slaveholding States obeyed the President's proclamation and promptly furnished troops.

Seeing the gigantic preparations which were being made by the United States to coerce them, the Southern States with similar activity prepared for their defence. The rupture which had thus divided the country reduced the officers of the army and navy to the alternative of either appearing in arms against their native States or of resigning their commissions in the service of the United States. All those of Southern birth, with few exceptions, adopted this latter course, and joined their fellow-countrymen "for weal or woe." Colonel Lee, who had been summoned from Texas to report in person to the com-

mander-in-chief at Washington, reached that city on March 1st, and was there at the time of the events above described.

On the 17th of April, 1861, the ordinance of secession was passed in the convention of Virginia. This cast the die for Colonel Lee. The sentiments expressed in his letters and his strong sense of the debt of allegiance he owed to his native State effectually prevented him from remaining any longer an officer of the United States army, and obliged him by every sentiment of duty and affection to cast his lot with the State of his nativity and with the numerous friends and relatives who made this State their natal home. Yet his final decision was not reached without severe mental trouble, nor without efforts on the side of the Government to preserve his highly-valued services to the Federal army. In fact, an offer of a most alluring character, and which must have won over any one with less than his supreme sense of duty, was made to him—no less an offer, in short, than the supreme command of the Federal army.

That this fact has been denied we are aware, yet there exists indubitable evidence of it. We have been fortunate enough to obtain a highly valuable letter from a near relative of General Lee describing a conversation with Mrs. Lee on this subject. This letter, it is true, does not settle the point in question, but it gives information no longer attainable concerning General Lee's feelings and actions at that time which is of the utmost importance. We extract the most significant portions of this letter:

"The first time I saw her (Mrs. Lee), shortly after the breaking out of the war, she related to me all that Robert Lee had suffered at the time of his resignation—that from the first commencement of our troubles he had decided that in the event of Virginia's secession duty (which had ever been his watchword) would compel him to follow. She told me what a sore trial it was to him to leave the old army, to give up the flag of the Union, to separate from so many of his old associates (*particularly* General Scott, for whom he always felt the greatest regard), and to be censured by many whose good opinion he valued. She told me of the interviews between General Scott

and himself, in which he used every argument he could bring to bear to induce him to remain with the Union. She mentioned an interview he had with Blair, in which he taunted him with its being his dislike to parting with the negro which made him remain with the South. This accusation Robert Lee indignantly denied, saying that if he owned all the negroes in the South he would gladly yield them up for the preservation of the Union. She mentioned that General Scott, in one of their interviews, said that in the event of his resignation, which from his advanced age must soon become a necessity, if Robert had remained with the North he (General Scott) believed he would be given the command of the Union army. *She did not say* that any offer had been made by the Government, but that in the event of his resignation he (General Scott) felt sure that Robert Lee would be offered his position. This may have been only General Scott's own opinion, formed from his admiration and appreciation of his high qualities as a soldier. I remember hearing at the time that General Scott had pronounced him the officer who had most distinguished himself in the Mexican War, and also that he had advised his Government to leave no stone unturned, if possible, to secure him to their side, saying at the same time that Robert Lee would be worth fifty thousand men to them."

In regard to this offer of the command of the army by Mr. Blair to Colonel Lee, as referred to in the foregoing letter, we have positive corroborative evidence, submitted by a person to whom Mr. Blair himself stated it as a fact. This evidence occurs in a letter written by a well-known resident of Washington, and from which we take the following extract:

"I have never seen the account (of the offer to General Lee of the command of the Federal army) worded just as I had it from Mr. Blair. The following is an accurate—I think a very nearly verbatim—report of it:

"MR. BLAIR: I come to you on the part of President Lincoln to ask whether any inducement that he can offer will prevail on you to take command of the Union army?

"COLONEL LEE: If I owned the four millions of slaves, I would cheerfully sacrifice them to the preservation of the

Union, but to lift my hand against my own State and people is impossible."

The most valuable testimony concerning this question, however, is that of General Lee himself, as given in a letter addressed to the Hon. Reverdy Johnson of date February 25, 1868. In this letter he uses the following language:

"I never intimated to any one that I desired the command of the United States army, nor did I ever have a conversation but with one gentleman, Mr. Francis Preston Blair, on the subject, which was at his invitation, and, as I understood, at the instance of President Lincoln.

"After listening to his remarks I declined the offer he made me to take command of the army that was to be brought into the field, stating, as candidly and courteously as I could, that, though opposed to secession and deprecating war, I could take no part in an invasion of the Southern States.

"I went directly from the interview with Mr. Blair to the office of General Scott—told him of the proposition that had been made to me and my decision. Upon reflection after returning home, I concluded that I ought no longer to retain any commission I held in the United States army, and on the second morning thereafter I forwarded my resignation to General Scott.

"At the time I hoped that peace would have been preserved—that some way would be found to save the country from the calamities of war; and I then had no other intention than to pass the remainder of my life as a private citizen.

"Two days afterward, on the invitation of the governor of Virginia, I repaired to Richmond, found that the convention then in session had passed the ordinance withdrawing the State from the Union, and accepted the commission of commander of its forces which was tendered me. These are the simple facts of the case."

The Mr. Blair who made this offer to Colonel Lee has heretofore been stated to have been Montgomery Blair, Postmaster-General of President Lincoln's Cabinet. The letter here quoted, however, settles the fact that it was Francis Preston Blair, Sr., father of Montgomery Blair, who was then a member

of Mr. Lincoln's Cabinet. Mr. F. P. Blair held no official position.

In the interviews between General Scott and Colonel Lee it is stated that the veteran commander earnestly sought to persuade the younger officer not to throw up his commission, telling him that it would be the greatest mistake of his life. But to all his pleadings Colonel Lee returned but one answer—that his sense of duty was stronger with him than any prospects of advancement, replying to the appeal not to send in his resignation in the following words: "I am compelled to: I cannot consult my own feelings in this matter."

The final result of the endeavors here indicated was Colonel Lee's resignation of his commission in the United States army, as indicated in the following letter addressed to General Scott:

"ARLINGTON, VA., April 20, 1861.

"GENERAL: Since my interview with you on the 18th inst. I have felt that I ought not longer to retain my commission in the army. I therefore tender my resignation, which I request you will recommend for acceptance. It would have been presented at once, but for the struggle it has cost me to separate myself from a service to which I have devoted the best years of my life and all the ability I possessed. During the whole of that time—more than a quarter of a century—I have experienced nothing but kindness from my superiors and a most cordial friendship from my comrades. To no one, general, have I been as much indebted as to yourself for uniform kindness and consideration, and it has always been my ardent desire to merit your approbation. I shall carry to the grave the most grateful recollections of your kind consideration, and your name and fame will always be dear to me.

"Save in the defence of my native State, I never desire again to draw my sword. Be pleased to accept my most earnest wishes for the continuance of your happiness and prosperity, and believe me most truly yours,

"R. E. LEE."

From the foregoing letter it will be seen what anguish

Colonel Lee must have felt in parting from his old commander and the service in which for thirty years he had occupied an honorable and distinguished position, and which still allured him with the most brilliant prospects. All must acknowledge that no selfish or unpatriotic motive influenced him in refusing to draw his sword against his native State, to which from early boyhood he had been taught by the wisest and the purest in the land he owed his first allegiance. Here it is also just to remark that all of those who resigned their commissions in the service of the United States to cast their lot with their native States were influenced by the same pure and unselfish motives.

On the same day in which this graceful and dignified letter was penned Colonel Lee wrote to his sister, Mrs. Marshall, then residing in Baltimore, expressing the same sentiments with the same earnestness and feeling:

“**MY DEAR SISTER :** I am grieved at my inability to see you. I have been waiting for a more convenient season, which has brought to many before me deep and lasting regret. Now we are in a state of war which will yield to nothing. The whole South is in a state of revolution, into which Virginia, after a long struggle, has been drawn; and, though I recognize no necessity for this state of things, and would have forborne and pleaded to the end for redress of grievances, real or supposed, yet in my own person I had to meet the question whether I should take part against my native State. With all my devotion to the Union, and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have therefore resigned my commission in the army, and, save in defence of my native State, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword.

“I know you will blame me, but you must think as kindly of me as you can, and believe that I have endeavored to do what I thought right. To show you the feeling and struggle it has cost me I send a copy of my letter to General Scott which accompanied my letter of resignation. I have no time for more.

. . . . May God guard and protect you and yours, and shower upon you every blessing, is the prayer of your devoted brother,
"R. E. LEE."

That General Lee sacrificed much in this action need scarcely be said. In addition to the high position offered him in the United States army, he yielded his private fortune, with his beautiful home, Arlington, a home endeared by historic associations and by many years of happy married life, a home of unsurpassed beauty of situation, and adorned with all that men most value, now destined to be the sport of rude soldiers, its priceless relics scattered, its beautiful surroundings desecrated, its choicest attractions destroyed. That this would be its fate he could not well have doubted. That he might become a houseless wanderer upon the face of the earth was within the limits of probability. He was daring all, risking all, for a principle, yet duty was a far stronger force in his soul than earthly advancement, and there is nothing to show that these considerations ruled with him for a moment. Not, "What will be to me most profitable?" but, "What does duty command?" was the question which forced itself upon his attention, and the instant he had decided upon this vital point all lesser considerations dropped from his mind, and he gave himself heart and soul to the service of his native State.

As soon as it was known that Colonel Lee had retired from the United States army the governor of Virginia tendered him the appointment of major-general and commander-in-chief of the forces of Virginia, and on the 23d of April, in the presence of the Convention and of a large assemblage of citizens, Mr. Janney, president of the Convention, presented to him his commission in the following address:

"In the name of the people of our native State, here represented, I bid you a cordial and heartfelt welcome to this hall, in which we may almost hear the echoes of the voices of the statesmen, the soldiers, and the sages of bygone days who have borne your name and whose blood now flows in your veins. We met in the month of February last charged with the solemn duty of protecting the rights, the honor, and the interests of

the people of this commonwealth. We differed for a time as to the best means of accomplishing that object, but there never was at any moment a shade of difference among us as to the great object itself ; and now, Virginia having taken her position, as far as the power of this Convention extends, we stand animated by one impulse, governed by one desire and one determination, and that is, that she shall be defended, and that no spot on her soil shall be polluted by the foot of an invader.

"When the necessity of having a leader for our forces became apparent, all hearts and all eyes, by the impulse of an instinct which is a surer guide than reason itself, turned to the old county of Westmoreland. We knew how prolific she had been in other days of heroes and statesmen ; we knew she had given birth to the Father of his country, to Richard Henry Lee, to Monroe, and last, though not least, to your own gallant father; and we knew well by your deeds that her productive power was not exhausted. Sir, we watched with the most profound and intense interest the triumphal march of the army led by General Scott, to which you were attached, from Vera Cruz to the capital of Mexico. We read of the sanguinary conflicts and the blood-stained fields, in all of which victory perched upon our banners. We knew of the unfading lustre which was shed upon the American arms by that campaign, and we knew also what your modesty has always disclaimed, that no small share of the glory of those achievements was due to your valor and your military genius.

"Sir, one of the proudest recollections of my life will be that I yesterday had the honor of submitting to this body the confirmation of the nomination, made by the governor of this State, of you as commander-in-chief of the naval and military forces of this commonwealth. I rose to put the question, and when I asked if this body would advise and consent to that appointment, there rushed from the hearts to the tongues of all the members an affirmative response, which told with an emphasis that could leave no doubt of the feeling whence it emanated. I put the negative of the question for form's sake, but there was an unbroken silence.

"Sir, we have by this unanimous vote expressed our convic-

tions that you are at this day, among the living citizens of Virginia, first in war, and we pray God most fervently that you may so conduct the operations committed to your charge that it may soon be said of you that you are first in peace, and when that time comes you will have gained the still prouder distinction of being first in the hearts of your countrymen.

"Yesterday your mother, Virginia, placed her sword in your hands upon the implied condition—which we know you will keep to the letter and in the spirit—that you will draw it only in defence, and that you will fall with it in your hand rather than the object for which it was placed there shall fail."

To this he replied :

"MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN OF THE CONVENTION: Profoundly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, for which I must say I was not prepared, I accept the position assigned me by your partiality. I would have much preferred had your choice fallen upon an abler man. Trusting in Almighty God, an approving conscience, and the aid of my fellow-citizens, I devote myself to the service of my native State, in whose behalf alone will I ever again draw my sword."

The impressiveness of the scene was much enhanced by the striking person and graceful manner of General Lee, who then appeared in the full vigor of manhood. Referring to the above scene, Hon. A. H. Stephens says:

"All the force which personal appearance could add to the power and impressiveness of the words, as well as the sentiments uttered by him, was imparted by his manly form and the great dignity as well as grace in his every action and movement. All these, combined, sent home to the breast of every one the conviction that he was thoroughly impressed himself with the full consciousness of the immense responsibility he had assumed. A more deeply interesting or solemn scene of the character I never witnessed."

At this time General Lee was in the prime of a healthful and vigorous life. He was fifty-four years of age, a man of finely-shaped and well-knit body, and of fully-developed faculties of mind. He was of graceful manner and grave and dignified

bearing, though he could be kind and even playful on occasion. All his previous life, all the training of mind and body he had undergone, had been devoted to the building up of a nature capable of a great enterprise, of physical powers and intellectual development fitted to the mighty work now before him, and he entered the arena of civil war fully prepared to undertake and to perform one of the most stupendous labors ever engaged in by mortal man.

CHAPTER VI.

OPENING OF THE CIVIL WAR.

Military Contrast of North and South.—General Lee organizes an Army.—Topography of Seat of War.—Lines of Operation.—Federal Advance.—Battle of Manassas.—Result of the Victory.—The Author's First Interview with General Lee.

AT the commencement of hostilities there was great inequality between the North and the South in all essentials necessary for the vigorous prosecution of war.

With the Northern States remained a thoroughly-organized government, with all of its machinery intact and capable of a rapid expansion to meet sudden emergencies. The army and navy, though small, had a complete organization, which formed a nucleus about which forces of any magnitude might be rapidly gathered. There was also a treasury into which flowed the revenue of a wealthy and prosperous nation, ever ready to furnish the sinews of war.

On the other hand, the Southern States were destitute of everything requisite even for defence, except the stout hearts and ready hands of their sons and the scanty supplies found in the arsenals and the navy-yards within their borders.

On the secession of Virginia, Governor Letcher called into service the entire military force of the State, which consisted of an unorganized militia, a few companies of volunteers which had been previously armed and equipped, and the cadets of the State military institution, two or three hundred in number.

The other Southern States were no better provided for than Virginia. The cadets and volunteers were the only available force that could be obtained for the seizure of the Gosport navy-yard and the arsenal at Harper's Ferry.

When General Lee accepted the command of the forces of Virginia, he was not ignorant of her unprovided condition, and

he was fully aware of the immense responsibility he assumed in undertaking her defence with the inadequate means at hand. But his native State was threatened with what he regarded as an unjustifiable invasion, and by every principle of honor and the duties of citizenship he was bound to defend her with heart and hand against all odds. Being a thorough master of the art of war, he at once comprehended the situation and promptly adopted measures to provide for it. The governor's call for men met with a prompt response from all parts of the State, and Lee proceeded vigorously with the work of organization. Companies were rapidly raised and equipped as well as circumstances would admit, and formed into regiments which were sent to the front for the occupation of important points, where they were brigaded and formed into divisions. There was no scarcity of men, but much difficulty was experienced in obtaining arms and equipments for the gallant volunteers. The limited supply of arms possessed by the State was soon exhausted, and it became necessary to supply deficiencies by collecting all the private arms that could be found; so the sporting rifle and fowling-piece were necessarily substituted for the musket, while in the absence of the sabre the cavalry was armed with the lance fabricated by the artisans of the country. Lee was not content with simply providing for the present emergency, but caused steps to be rapidly taken for the manufacture of cannon and for providing ammunition and small-arms for the future use of the army. Notwithstanding the enormous difficulties to be surmounted, the Virginia forces ere long rose to the proportions of a grand army.

Among the inconveniences with which the commanding general had then to contend was one which meets every person in a position of importance—that of solicitation to provide places of trust and emolument for relatives and friends on considerations of family ties and affectionate interest rather than of devotion to the public good. How he met demands of this kind the following letter will serve to show, as also to indicate the sentiments which then ruled in his mind. It is dated immediately after he assumed command of the Virginia troops:

"RICHMOND, 25 April, 1861.

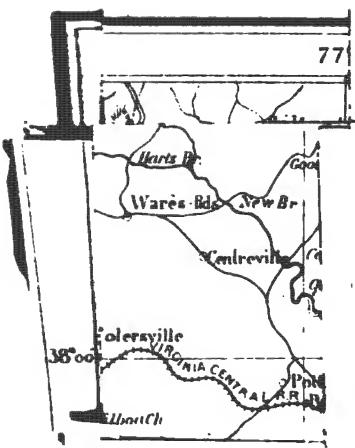
"MY DEAR ——: I have received your letter of 23d. I am sorry your nephew has left his college and become a soldier. It is necessary that persons on my staff should have a knowledge of their duties and an experience of the wants of the service to enable me to attend to other matters. It would otherwise give me great pleasure to take your nephew. I shall remember him if anything can be done. I am much obliged to you for Dr. M——'s letter. Express to him my gratitude for his sentiments, and tell him that no earthly act could give me so much pleasure as to restore peace to my country. But I fear it is now out of the power of man, and in God alone must be our trust. I think our policy should be purely on the defensive —to resist aggression and allow time to allay the passions and permit Reason to resume her sway. Virginia has to-day, I understand, joined the Confederate States. Her policy will doubtless, therefore, be shaped by united counsels. I cannot say what it will be, but trust that a merciful Providence will not dash us from the height to which his smiles have raised us. I wanted to say many things to you before I left home, but the event was rendered so imperatively speedy that I could not.

"May God preserve you and yours! Very truly,

"R. E. LEE."

Having proved his great powers of organization and administration, General Lee soon exhibited his remarkable skill as a tactician and strategist. Being well acquainted with the topography of Virginia, which was obviously destined to become a grand theatre of war, he skilfully availed himself of this knowledge for the approaching campaign. In order to show how this was accomplished, it is necessary in advance to describe the topography of a large portion of Virginia, so far as to delineate the natural features which were destined to influence military operations, such as mountains, rivers, valleys, peninsulas, and swamps, and also roads.

The Potomac, which formed a part of the eastern boundary, served as a primary base for the armies of invasion, and, taken in connection with the Chesapeake and with Hampton Roads,



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afforded an easy line of communication between this base and the army operating in the country contiguous to those waters. The interior rivers, such as the Rappahannock and the Rapidan, furnished good defensive lines and convenient intermediate bases for aggressive operations, and the York and the James became important auxiliaries to the armies that operated on the peninsula lying between those rivers. The Dismal Swamp, the Blue Ridge, and the successive ridges of the Alleghany Mountains were adapted to serve, in the hands of an able general, as powerful barriers and impenetrable masks for secret or delicate manœuvring. The railroads and the principal turnpikes also bore an important part in giving character and direction to military operations. The grand theatre of war may be divided into five strategic divisions, which are distinctly marked out by the natural features of the country. First comes Western Virginia, lying between the Alleghany Mountains and the Ohio River; next in order is the Valley of Virginia; then the area embraced by the Blue Ridge and the Rappahannock; then the peninsulas between that river, the York, and the James, and the country south of the James, including Petersburg; and lastly, the peninsula formed by the James and the Appomattox.

Western Virginia being separated from the main theatre of war by mountain-barriers, and bordered on two sides by hostile territory, was difficult to defend. The Shenandoah Valley, being a wealthy region and well calculated for flank or turning movements, became a favorite field of operations, while the other strategical divisions afforded fine fields for attack and defence and for manœuvring.

About the last of May, General Lee had organized, equipped, and sent to the field more than 30,000 men, and various regiments were in a forward state of preparation. At that time the Confederate authorities held his military capacity in such high estimation as to retain him at Richmond, which had then become the seat of government, as acting commander-in-chief of the Confederate forces until his services were urgently demanded elsewhere.

During the month of June the Federal plan of operations

became obvious and the Confederate line of defence developed. It was thought by the Washington authorities that the capture of Richmond would be the most speedy way to master the revolution. Therefore the United States put forth its strength for that purpose, and Richmond became the object of future operations. A defensive line was established by the Confederate military authorities, the left of which nestled among the mountains of Western Virginia, while its right rested on the Dismal Swamp, the line embracing the Shenandoah Valley, the Orange and Alexandria and the Manassas Gap railroads, the lower Potomac, Yorktown, and Norfolk. At the same time the Federal forces occupied an exterior line extending from the Ohio River to Fortress Monroe, and including a part of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the Potomac, the Chesapeake Bay, and Hampton Roads.

The effective Confederate force in Virginia by the last of June amounted to about 65,000 men, distributed as follows: 5000 in Western Virginia, under General Robert Garnett; 15,000 in the Shenandoah Valley, under General J. E. Johnston; 20,000 at Manassas and Bull Run, commanded by General Beauregard; about 8000 at Acquia Creek and on the lower Potomac, under General T. H. Holmes; while the remainder were comprised within the commands of Magruder at Yorktown and Huger at Norfolk.

At the same time, the Federal forces at Fortress Monroe, under Butler; at Washington, under McDowell; at Williamsport, under Patterson; and on the border of Western Virginia, under McClellan, aggregated at least 100,000 men.

Although it was well known that the Federals had selected Richmond for their objective point, their real line of operation was still in obscurity. There was at Washington a diversity of opinion regarding the plan to be adopted: some proposed to establish the base of operations at Fortress Monroe, and then to proceed up the Peninsula by way of Yorktown and Williamsburg; others recommended the assumption of a base at some convenient point on the Rappahannock, whence an advance might be made by the shortest line to Richmond.

But the majority favored the line of the Orange and Alex-

andria Railroad as far as Manassas Junction, and thence southward by Fredericksburg. This line was ultimately taken, for the reason that Washington would not be left uncovered while the army was forcing its way toward Richmond.

The advantages of the several lines of operations suggested will appear during the progress of this narrative. About the 1st of June a collision occurred between a part of the forces of Magruder and Butler on the Peninsula, and early in July Garnett was defeated in North-western Virginia by McClellan. These affairs were initiatory to the more serious conflict at Manassas.

It may be said at this point that whilst there will necessarily be in this work much in which the subject of the memoir is not directly concerned, many scenes and incidents in which he did not personally appear, it should not be forgotten that it was his master mind and hand that first collected and prepared and set in motion from the smallest and most discouraging beginnings the means of defence that afterward became so mighty.

As to the actual extent of these means of defence at the period of secession, some interesting information may be obtained from the statements of General Josiah Gorgas, the able chief of ordnance of the Confederate States. He remarks that when he assumed his place as chief of ordnance he found in all the arsenals within the Confederacy only 15,000 rifles and 120,000 inferior muskets, with some old flint muskets at Richmond and Hall's rifles and carbines at Baton Rouge. There was no powder, except small quantities at Baton Rouge and at Mount Vernon, Ala., relics of the Mexican War. There was very little artillery, and no cavalry arms or equipments. It is but just to this able officer to state that his services in managing the ordnance department were invaluable to the Confederacy. He strenuously objected to the project of destroying the cotton and tobacco, and advised their use to purchase arms and munitions by aid of blockade-runners. It may be said that there was scarcely ever a demand on him which he was not prepared to meet, and that, in the words of General J. E. Johnston, "He created the ordnance department out of nothing."

The Federal preparations by the 1st of July were near completion. At that time General McClellan with a large force advanced into West Virginia, while General Patterson entered the Shenandoah Valley at the head of twenty-five thousand men. General McDowell was at Washington with a splendidly-appointed army, ready to cross the Potomac at that point.

On the 8th of July, McClellan attacked and defeated a small Confederate force in West Virginia, killing its gallant commander, General Robert Garnett. Patterson had in the mean time advanced toward Martinsburg, meeting with but little opposition. From that place he slowly advanced, while General Joseph E. Johnston retired toward the vicinity of Winchester.

While these operations were in progress in the Valley and West Virginia, Generals McDowell and Beauregard were preparing for the real contest on the line of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. By referring to the map of Virginia it will be perceived that the position of Manassas is one of considerable strategic importance. The intersection of the Manassas Gap and the Orange and Alexandria railroads and the convergence of several common roads make it a place of easy concentration. The Warrenton and Leesburg turnpikes, the roads to Fredericksburg, and the important passes of the Blue Ridge were of great military importance, while the Manassas Gap Railroad afforded a rapid line of communication between the Valley and the position at Manassas. The occupation of this position by a large Confederate force doubtless confirmed the Federals in the adoption of that route for their advance upon Richmond; for to have taken either the route of the Peninsula or the one by way of the Rappahannock before having dislodged this force would have endangered the safety of Washington. The Federals' plan of operation being developed, General Beauregard prepared to receive their attack. For that purpose he occupied a range of low hills about a mile in the rear of, and nearly parallel to, Bull Run, a small stream four miles east of Manassas Junction. His right rested on the Occoquan, his centre on the Orange and Alexandria

Railroad, and his left on the Warrenton turnpike. This turnpike, continuing nearly parallel with the railroad, crosses Bull Run by a stone bridge of a single span of about thirty feet. This stream, flowing between steep banks, offers a formidable obstruction to an army advancing in battle array. It was strongly picketed with infantry from the stone bridge down, covering the entire Confederate front. For some distance above the bridge the stream was only lightly picketed with cavalry. Beauregard, impressed with the belief that the Federals would direct their main effort against his right wing in order to force it back and turn his position on that flank, with the view of cutting off his communication with Richmond, directed his chief attention to that part of his line. For the greater security of this position, and for increased facility in gaining information, he established strong outposts at Fairfax Court-house and Centreville, points a few miles east of Bull Run.

By the middle of July, McDowell was ready for the intended movement with the best appointed army that had ever been seen in America. It had been created under the fostering care of the President and under the eye of the veteran Scott. It therefore lacked nothing its critical commander could suggest in the way of equipments and means for transportation and supplies. On the 16th of July this proud army entered Virginia, confident of a triumphant march to Richmond. On the 17th, General McDowell drove in the Confederate outposts at Centreville and Fairfax Court-house, and on the 18th appeared in force before the Confederate lines on Bull Run. An active skirmish ensued, under cover of which the Federal commander made a critical reconnaissance. Finding that the Confederate centre and right were too formidable to admit of an encouraging hope of success, he abandoned the preconceived plan of forcing the right and withdrew his forces to Centreville, where he intended to operate by the road from Sudley Ford to Manassas, which was discovered to have been undefended by General Beauregard in his anxiety concerning his right.

A battle being now inevitable, Generals Johnston and Holmes were directed to reinforce Beauregard. Such was the condition of affairs on the 18th of July. On the 19th and 20th the Fed-

eral army remained inactive except in making partial reconnoissances. This unlooked-for delay enabled General T. H. Holmes to reach the vicinity of Manassas with his command, consisting of 1265 infantry, six pieces of light artillery, and one company of cavalry, 90 men. General J. E. Johnston also arrived about noon on the 20th inst with a portion of Bee's and Bartow's brigades, numbering 2732 infantry, 300 cavalry under Stuart, and Imboden's and Pendleton's batteries, to which were afterward added Barksdale's Mississippi regiment, which had arrived from Lynchburg, and Hampton's Legion of 600 men. Jackson's brigade, 2611 strong, had reached Manassas Junction the evening previous, as had the Seventh and Eighth Georgia regiments.

Early in the morning of the 21st, McDowell, contrary to the expectations of the Confederates, had crossed Bull Run at Sudley's Ford, and nearly gained their left before he was discovered. At this critical moment he was gallantly attacked by Colonel N. G. Evans with a small brigade, and held in check until Generals Bee, Bartow, and Hampton could put their troops in position. Leaving a force to oppose Evans, McDowell continued to advance and attack General Bee. A brilliant conflict ensued, in which Bartow's regiment and Hampton's Legion participated. At length these troops were forced back until supported by the brigades of Cocke and Jackson. The interposition of Jackson enabled Bee to re-form his brigade and continue the conflict.* The positions of the other part of the army being remote, reinforcements could not be readily sent to those engaged. Notwithstanding the great odds against them, these troops maintained their ground, until about the middle of the afternoon they were suddenly reinforced by Kirby Smith's brigade, which had been detained by a railroad accident. Smith attacked vigorously on the flank of the Federals, who, being thus

* It is to this event we owe a title that has become famous in history, that of *Stone-wall Jackson*. Bee approached Jackson, and pointed to the shattered columns that were huddled together in the woods, exclaiming, "General, they are beating us back."—"Sir, we'll give them the bayonet," replied Jackson. Bee, rushing back to his troops, rallied them with the words, "There is Jackson *standing like a stone wall*; let us determine to die here, and we will conquer." In a few moments afterward Bee fell mortally wounded, holding in his hand the sword which South Carolina had presented him.

unexpectedly assailed at the moment when victory seemed in their grasp, paused, wavered, and then gave way. Being now pressed in front and flank, they fell into confusion; then a panic ensued, and the whole army became a disorganized mass, rushing wildly toward Washington. There was never a more complete victory, but it was dearly bought at the price of Bee, Bartow, and many other gallant soldiers.

Pending the battle, Richmond was greatly agitated. The pale faces of the women and the anxious looks of the men plainly bespoke intense anxiety. The telegraph-office was constantly surrounded by dense crowds eager to catch every item of news from the field of battle. At one time the despatch would state an advantage gained by the Confederates; then a gleam of joy would pervade the crowd and the good news would be proclaimed by an exultant shout. At another time it would tell that the Federals were gaining ground, when anxiety and doubt would dispel the previous joy, and the crowd would sink into gloomy silence and dark forebodings. As the day wore on several hours elapsed without news. The suspense was then agonizing. Conjecture suggested the most disastrous results, and at last rumor whispered that Johnston and Beauregard had been defeated, the telegraph had been seized, and McDowell was in full march upon Richmond. These groundless rumors filled the city with consternation, but about four o'clock they were succeeded by the intelligence that the enemy was giving away, and that Bee, Jackson, and others had held the field against all odds until the opportune arrival of Kirby Smith caused the defeat of the Federal army. A little later another telegram announced a glorious victory for the Confederates—that Johnston and Beauregard were masters of the field, and that McDowell had been routed and his entire army was in rapid flight for Washington. This news created a reaction of feeling beyond description. The people were lifted from the depths of despair to the height of joy, and the city was filled with the wildest exultation. This, however, was soon moderated by the recollection that the sweetness of victory must necessarily be followed by the bitterness of grief.

After the battle followed tidings of the casualties. First

came news that Bee and Bartow were slain, and Jackson and Smith were wounded. Then followed the long lists of killed and wounded, composed of those less conspicuous in the army, but not less dearly loved at home. The perusal of these lists soon spread mourning throughout the land, and the natural respect for the bereaved checked all further demonstration of victory. Scenes of terror and grief such as those above described yield sad evidence to the fact that the miseries of war are by no means confined to the camp and field, but are yet more keenly felt at home.

Some of the principal features of the Federal plan of the campaign were that McDowell with a powerful central army should advance on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, crush Beauregard at Manassas, and proceed by the most favorable route to Richmond, while Butler from Fortress Monroe threatened the Confederate forces on the Peninsula, and Patterson occupied Johnston in the Valley. In case the latter should retire beyond the Blue Ridge, Patterson was to promptly reinforce McDowell. Johnston, however, skilfully eluded his adversary, and by rapid movements over the Manassas Gap Railroad joined Beauregard on the eve of battle with the greater part of his forces, leaving his antagonist in ignorance of his movements until it was too late for him to execute the latter part of his instructions. Therefore McDowell had to contend single-handed with the combined forces of Johnston and Beauregard. The rapid concentration of the Confederate forces and the splendid victory at Manassas are conclusive evidences of the masterly combination that led to those results.

Soon after the battle of Manassas, Lee, Johnston, and Beauregard were created generals, and General Lee was assigned to the command of the department of West Virginia.

The signal defeat of McDowell, which was so complete as to paralyze the Federal plan of operations for months, has been the subject of much discussion, and the search for its causes has been productive of numerous theories, from which we shall select that of Mr. Stephens in his *War between the States*. He says:

"Great as was the skill of Generals Johnston and Beauregard

in the disposition and movements of their squadrons, that of McDowell was also very great. His whole plan of operations from the beginning to the end showed military genius of the highest order. The result, therefore, did not so much depend upon the superior skill of the commanders on the Confederate side as upon the high objects and motives with which they, as well as those under them, were inspired. Johnston and Beauregard were both often in the thickest of the fight, leading in person, with colors in hand, on to the charge regiments whose officers had fallen. They and those who followed them were animated by the sentiments uttered by Mr. Davis in his message at Montgomery and received the day before at Richmond.

"The struggle with them was not for power, dominion, or dignity, nor for fame, but to resist palpable and dangerous assumptions of power and to repel wanton aggressions upon long-established rights. They fought for those principles and institutions of self-government which were the priceless heritage of their ancestors.

"On the other side, thousands of those who were sent on this expedition set out not only with reluctance, but with the consciousness that the whole movement was wrong. They had volunteered for no such purpose. They had tendered their services with the sole view of defending the capital. It was under the impression and belief, so extensively created at the North, that the Confederates intended to take Washington, that much the greater portion of this immense army had with very patriotic motives rushed to the rescue. Their object was to defend their own rights against an expected assault, and not to make aggressions upon the rights of others."

The period at which we have now arrived is that in which A. L. Long, the writer of this work, first entered into personal relations with General Lee—relations which ere long became intimate and were destined to continue throughout the war. Arriving in Richmond shortly after the battle of Manassas, he, in company with Colonels Loring and Stevenson and Lieutenant Deshler, all of whom had resigned their commissions in the United States army, waited upon General Lee to offer their

services to the Confederacy. Loring and Stevenson, being old acquaintances of the general and superior in rank to their two companions, naturally received his attention first. This gave the writer an opportunity of observing his personal appearance and surroundings. The impression received it will be of interest to describe after we have detailed the incidents of the interview.

Having ended his interview with Loring and Stevenson, the general addressed himself to Deshler and Long. His words were few, but directly to the point. After a few commonplace remarks he informed Long that he had been appointed major and chief of artillery of the Army of North-western Virginia; that Colonel Loring had been created brigadier-general and assigned to its command, and that Long should report to him for further orders. Stevenson received the appointment of colonel and assistant adjutant-general for the Army of North-western Virginia. Deshler was made captain of artillery and assigned to the same army. When this interview was about concluded, General Lee remarked that it was necessary to strike the enemy in North-western Virginia without delay, and asked Loring when he would be ready to set out for his command. Loring replied that two or three days would be necessary for his preparation.

In this, Major Long's first interview with General Lee, he was struck with the ease and grace of his bearing and his courteous and mild but decided manner; and the high opinion he then formed of him was fully sustained in the intimate relations which afterward existed between them. Though at that time he had attained the age of fifty-four years, his erect and muscular frame, firm step, and the animated expression of his eye made him appear much younger. He exhibited no external signs of his rank, his dress being a plain suit of gray. His office was simply furnished with plain desks and chairs. There were no handsomely-dressed aides-de-camp or staff officers filling the anteroom. There was not even a sentinel to mark the military headquarters. His only attendants were Captain Walter Taylor—afterward Colonel Taylor—adjutant-general of the Army of Northern Virginia, and two or three clerks.

General Lee was remarkable for his rapid despatch of business and ready appreciation of character—qualities which are indispensable to a commander-in-chief. Having been appointed, as has been stated, major-general and commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces a few days after the secession of that State, he entered with alacrity upon the arduous duty of forming an army from new levies. Such was his wonderful talent for organization that in the space of two months he was able to equip for the field sixty regiments of infantry and cavalry, besides numerous batteries of artillery, making an aggregate of nearly 50,000 men. Nor was equipment for service the whole of the duty performed. The valiant behavior of these new troops not long afterward on the field of Manassas showed that the essential of drill had by no means been neglected, and that, though inferior to their antagonists in equipment, they were their superiors in most of the qualities which go to the making of effective soldiery. They formed the germ and rudiment of that gallant Army of Northern Virginia which was to prove its mettle on many a hard-fought field, and under the lead of its great commander to win a glory from which its final fate can in no just sense detract.